



U.S. Department of Justice

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For Immediate Release:

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April 3, 2006

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: James Earl Sherwood

MIO RESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO ARSON

James Earl Sherwood, age 34 of Mio, Michigan, pleaded guilty in Bay City, Michigan on May 2, 2006 to three counts of arson in the Huron-Manistee National Forest.

The indictment charged that on various dates in 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, Mr. Sherwood set fires in the Huron-Manistee National Forest, creating both a risk of death or serious injury to others, and causing damages and loss in violation of Title 18, United States Code, section 1855. As part of his plea, Sherwood admitted to making delayed ignition devices and using the devices to start fires in the forest.

Mr. Sherwood was originally arrested on a federal warrant on June 2, 2004. He is on a \$75,000 unsecured bond. The penalty for each count of conviction is up to 5 years in prison, plus fines and restitution. Sentencing for Sherwood is set for August 3, 2006 at 3:00 pm.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said, "Protecting our National Forests, particularly from the danger of arson, is important not only because of the need to preserve our resources, but to protect human lives. I applaud the excellent local, state and federal cooperation which lead to this successful prosecution."

The case was investigated by a task force consisting of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Oscoda and Alcona County Sheriff's Departments, the Michigan State

Police and the U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement Division. Anyone with information regarding forest fires may contact the U.S. Forest Service at (989) 826-3252.